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ABSTRACT

The focus of this study is to examine the early reports and studies concerning the development of two-year colleges in Oklahoma. The basic inquiry is the examination of the reports of the Oklahoma State Superintendent of Instruction and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education as well as dissertations or theses produced by University of Oklahoma students. The author's goal is to obtain a better understanding of the development of two-year colleges and also to understand the relevance of several contemporary educational issues for Oklahoma's two-year colleges (i.e., retention, transfer, role and purpose, students, faculty, accreditation, curriculum, and articulation). Particular attention is given to the establishment and development of municipal junior colleges. In the conclusion, the author asserts that Oklahoma's public junior colleges developed along two paths. State-supported junior colleges arose from the expansion of the state supported preparatory schools and the six agriculture schools. Local school districts established what was mistakenly referred to as municipal junior colleges. The first schools established for either path were formally recognized as junior colleges in 1920. (Contains 37 references.) (RC)

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The Development of Oklahoma's Public Two-Year Colleges: An Enigma and a Battleground

Michael W. Simpson

Introduction

The focus of this study is to examine the early reports and studies concerning the development of two-year colleges in Oklahoma. The basic inquiry is the examination of the reports of the Oklahoma State Superintendent of Instruction and the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education. Since most of the information cited herein is from these reports, the citation is modified such that the number of the report and either Superintendent or Regents as is appropriate and the year will be provided. In addition, this examination has included review of the dissertations or theses produced by University of Oklahoma students. References to more general works that touch upon the issues or Oklahoma specifically are also used. The goal is to obtain a better understanding of the development of the two-year colleges and to also understand issues that are the subject of much discussion today concerning the two-year colleges: retention, transfer, role and purpose, students, faculty, accreditation, curriculum, and articulation. Particular attention is drawn to the municipal junior colleges. It is with these institutions that we have the research and discussions regarding very basic questions regarding the nature and purposes of education in general and of two-year institutions in particular.

Enigma is an appropriate term to describe the development given the conflicting use of such terms as junior college at the beginnings of the 20th century and the nature of education at that time. (Monroe, 1912, p. 573). Today, we have more fixed meanings and understandings of what secondary and post-secondary education is. But in those earlier

days, high schools were not such a fixture and matters were more fluid. What is clear is that Oklahoma was an early and important player in the junior college movement. (Witt, Wattenbarger, Gollattscheck and Suppiger, 1994, pp. 67, 81).

Confusing Origin

The first mention of what can be considered junior colleges in the State Superintendent reports occurs in the sixth such report in 1914. The report advocates that the two state preparatory schools at Tonkawa and Claremore be converted into junior normal schools to deal with an extreme shortage of trained teachers in the state. It is clear that these two state schools were secondary schools and it is clear that making them normal schools meant that they would offer two years post-secondary (college) training. That is the program that the six normal schools provided and such programs were considered two years of college. The report also mentions that legislation passed by the fifth legislature had authorized the leading city high schools and the six district agricultural school to also provide such training. (6th Superintendent, 1914, pp. 11, 83). Witt claims that Oklahoma's first public junior college was the University Preparatory School at Tonkawa. He claims that such was established in 1902 and by 1904 was offering college and transfer curricula in addition to its technical base. (Witt, et. al., 1994, 63). However, the 1914 Superintendent's report places that school clearly as a secondary school. (6th Superintendent, 1914, p. 83). Nutter indicates that the University Preparatory School was the first state institution to be accredited as a junior college in 1920. (1974, p. 16). The matter is confusing because Oklahoma developed two-year colleges rather early

but they apparently were not considered junior colleges. These two year colleges were the six state normal schools at Edmond (1890), Alva (1897), Weatherford (1901), Tahlequah (1907), Durant (1907), and Ada (1907). In addition, the six agricultural district schools may have provided some college-level studies since they were considered part of higher education even though clearly considered providers of high school training. (Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education, February 1963, 7; hereinafter Regents, 1963; Nutter, 1974, p. 16). This report indicates at page 8 that from 1907 to 1941 the names as well as the purposes of nearly all of the institutions changed one or more times. It simply is not clear whether any of the schools were or should be considered junior colleges before 1920. Certainly, many may properly be considered two-year colleges. The next development in Oklahoma is much clearer in regards to the issue of established junior colleges.

Oklahoma's Municipal Junior Colleges

The first municipal or public district junior college was created at Muskogee in 1920. (Witt, et. al., 1994, p. 63; Musselman, 1938, p. 4; Cotton, 1929, p. 35). The description as municipal or public district is misleading. Oklahoma's municipalities have no control over school districts. The term public district seems more appropriate in that the local junior colleges were created by local school districts. (Nutter, 1974, p.15). However, it is clear that these colleges served students beyond the boundaries of the local public school district. (Cotton, 1929, pp. 34-35; Musselman, 1938, p.21).

Thirty-five such institutions were created between 1920 and 1939. Many of these operated for only a short time. In 1938-39, nineteen such schools were in operation and

this was the highest number for any year. (Nutter, 1974, p. 19). The reason for this apex is discussed in the following paragraph.

These institutions were created by local school boards and were housed in the high schools. There was no statutory basis for their creation other than a general authority for school districts to provide educational opportunities through age 21. The Junior College Bill, enacted in 1939, permitted the use of school district buildings and equipment. This ratified what had been occurring for nearly 20 years. The bill authorized tuition which is what most schools had already been using for support. School districts were prohibited from levying any taxes above and beyond what had already been authorized for K-12 schooling. No state aid was provided. This was in accordance with the recommendations of the State Superintendent in 1932. The State Superintendent was concerned with the need for a law to protect the elementary and high schools. (14th Superintendent, 1932, p.9). Nutter speculates that this was the reason that no new municipal junior colleges developed after 1939. (Nutter, 1974, pp. 19-20). However, the creation of the Oklahoma State Regents for Higher Education in 1941 may have been a substantial reason. Although only a coordinating board with technical legal authority only over state funded institutions, it was created after a vote of the people calling for a unified system of higher education in Oklahoma. There was much concern that Oklahoma had too many colleges and they were under funded. (Oklahoma State Regents, 1963, pp. 8-9). Also, the State Committee on Accreditation of Municipal Junior Colleges was created under a 1941 statute. This committee was under the direction of both the State Superintendent and the State Regents. (Nutter, 1974, p. 37).

Why were the local junior colleges created? Local residents would have easy access to inexpensive post-secondary training. (Nutter, 1974, p. 17). Even though the state colleges were tuition free, the expenses of travel and room and board were impediments to attendance. (15th Superintendent, 1934, 183). In addition, the increase in high school creation and attendance spurred demand for increasing levels of education. (14th Superintendent, 1932, p.2; 15th Superintendent, 1934, 12, 183). There was also an apparent concern with the immaturity of the high school graduates to accept the responsibility of studying at the university level. Other reasons cited for the development of these local junior colleges included community pride, keeping money at home, and promotion of community culture. (15th Superintendent, 1934, p. 185).

The reports also show the social control nature of the establishment of junior colleges. 1939 was the apex in number of operating local junior colleges in Oklahoma. The Great Depression years saw the creation or re-establishment of 25 local junior colleges. Enrollment grew from 130 to 1749 from the years 1930 to 1939. (Quattlebaum, 1939, pp.7-9). The State Superintendent provided the following figures concerning youth between the ages of 17 and 21 in Oklahoma during 1934: total 246, 300; 33,000 either in high school or college; 40,000 permanently employed by the CCC and in penal institutions; 100,000 employed part time, mainly on farms; 73,000 idle. The superintendent notes that youth have been driven from home and drift from town to town. In order to combat crime and general demoralization, the superintendent called for the extension of high schools for one or two years of additional study. In effect, he advocated the establishment of more local junior colleges. (15th Superintendent, 1934, p. 13). This

well meaning proposal has larger societal implications. The junior college would serve as a societal cooling out. The depression caused people to question the capitalist system. Rather than run the risk of a massive uprising by youth and others displaced from the job market through no fault of their own, this proposal hoped to get them into the junior college with the hope that they could someday fit into a system left relatively unchanged.

A similar use of the local junior colleges was encouraged following the Second World War. The war reduced the number of local junior colleges to 9. Immediately after the war, the number rose to 15. (Nutter, 1974, p.36). The State Regents reported in 1944 that its member institutions were organized to serve war veterans by admitting them as unclassified if not a high school graduate, by providing guidance and counseling, by offering remedial courses (referred to as refresher), by recognizing training and experience, and by serving the veteran in any way and responding immediately. (2nd Regents, 1944, p.23). By 1946, the State Regents were encouraging veterans to consider the municipal junior colleges. (3rd Regents, 1946, p.39). While the stated reason was to relieve overcrowding in the senior institutions, we must wonder why the focus was on the returning veterans and not all students generally. Veterans, then as now, tend to be older and more experienced in the ways of the world. The universities are often threatened by such students in that such students tend to question the university more. (Quinnan, 1997).

What was the purpose of the local junior colleges? In the early days, they helped train teachers. This was ended in 1934. The report indicates that the training was good in some but poor in most. (15th Superintendent, 1934, p. 156). In 1938, the most popular occupational choice still was teaching. (Musselman, 1938, p. 33). This does not appear to

be unique to Oklahoma. (Junior College, 1918).

A more general discussion of purpose does not appear until 1936 when two viewpoints are presented. The first is that local junior colleges should offer the first two years of college and that such should be planned to articulate with the senior colleges. The second was that local junior colleges should be terminal institutions. The report concludes that the local junior colleges should do both but size and facilities would be needed to conduct both. (16th Superintendent, 1936, 73-74). Later in the same report, the definition of a standard junior college is given as "an institution of higher education with a curriculum covering two years of collegiate work". (16th Superintendent, 1936, p.82). Cotton notes the entry in the 1929 catalog for Muskogee Junior College that it does not provide differentiated instruction but only solid and fundamental courses in the freshman and sophomore classes at most universities. He found that all of the other junior colleges did the same. (Cotton, 1929, pp. 41-42). He is critical of this because he knows that a good portion will not go on to university and that the college would attract more students by offering more vocational programs. He calls for a more comprehensive community college; one that offers practical training, citizenship courses, and other courses all designed for the needs of the community.

Further confirmation that the local junior colleges are providing the course work for the first two years of college is given in 1938. Few terminal courses were offered. The courses are primarily in English, math, history, government, physics or chemistry, and foreign languages. These are the same as at the senior colleges. (17th Superintendent,

1938, pp. 4, 68). It appears that when junior colleges did offer vocational terminal programs, the demand was not there by the students. (2nd Regents, 1944, p.37).
In 1939, 60% of course offerings were in the academic subjects and 40% were in non-academic. However, 77% of the enrollment was in the academic or college transfer courses and only 23% in the non-academic terminal courses. (Quattlebaum, 1939, pp. 53-54).

The idea of general education is mentioned in a 1948 essay entitled "Who Should Go to College". One of the issues was whether we were overproducing college graduates for professional service. The report states that much of the extended education should be of a general sort, not occupational but for citizenship and cultural purposes. "This kind of education can never be overproduced in a democratic society", states the essay. The essay concludes that since there are substantial barriers to college attendance that it is premature to consider the issue of overproduction on college graduates. Interestingly, the local junior colleges were designed to overcome some or all of the five barriers listed: cost; shortage of facilities; concentrated geographic offerings; outdated instruction; and inadequacy of counseling. (4th Regents, 1948, pp. 81-83). Two years later, general education is recommended for both vocational and academic transfer programs. (5th Regents, 1950, p. 94).

This concern with overproduction of college graduates is mentioned in 1929 when the Oklahoma local junior colleges are criticized for focusing too much on academics. Complaints were made that there were too many lawyers, teachers, and that there soon would be too many doctors. (Cotton, 1929, pp. 42-43). Such complaints are usually made

by those who are already in the professions with strong economic interest to control supply and maintain prices. They are often made by an elite that is threatened by the educational attainment of the poor. The 1948 essay mentioned above was concerned that too many college graduates without proper job prospects might create civil unrest. Is that necessarily a bad thing? Perhaps these disgruntled college educated graduates would create a more just society. By 1956 the definition of junior college had changed. The junior college was defined as an "institution offering a curriculum of one or two years of work which continues or which supplements" senior high work. (8th Regents, 1956, p. 90). This definition deleted the 1936 language that junior colleges were institutions of higher education that offered college work. (16th Superintendent, 1936, p.82). These schools were created by local people to serve local people. Apparently, local people wanted a chance at a real college education and the chance to graduate from a senior institution. They were serving local needs or they would not have existed. Yet they are criticized by education experts for not serving some other purpose. That purpose seems to be to divert a sizeable number of poor people to the vocations and away from the professions.

Women might be interested to learn that in 1960 one of the listed purposes for junior colleges was to "provide a good general education course for the girl who plans to marry after two years of college work". It seems that junior colleges were to award the MRS. degree. (10th Regents, 1960, p.93). This same report denies that the purpose is to relieve senior colleges enrollment problem but rather to help all students reach their potential through good guidance and courses in pre-professional, technical, and general education.

This counters the arguments of many early scholars of the junior college that contended that the junior college primarily benefited senior colleges by allowing them to concentrate on advanced graduate and professional work. (Zook, 1927, p. 10; Eells, 1931, p.199).

Were local junior college graduates transferring? A 1938 survey found that 43.4% of local junior college students definitely intended to complete a four year degree and an additional 34% saying they probably would complete a four year degree. (Musselman, 1938, p. 28). In 1938, approximately 70% of local junior college graduates transferred to higher education institutions. (Nutter, 1974, p. 18). Muskogee Junior College reported 70% transfer for the early 1950's. (7th Regents, 1954, p. 45). A bigger issue was retention of students from the first to the second year. Records indicate a retention rate of around 25%. (Musselman, 1938, p. 9; 16th Superintendent, 1936, pp.76-77; 17th Superintendent, 1938, 67). It should be noted that the drop out rate at the senior colleges was considered "large" and attributed to less personal attention to self exploration. (Cotton, 1929, p.7; Eells, 1931, pp. 200-201).

A continuing issue with junior colleges involves articulation or acceptance of junior college courses for credit at senior colleges. Recall that the early criticism of Oklahoma's municipal junior colleges was that they simply mirrored the first two years at the senior colleges. The municipal junior colleges had close contact with the University of Oklahoma and Oklahoma A and M (now Oklahoma State University). Junior colleges offering only one year of work were inspected and accredited by these two state senior colleges. (17th Superintendent, 1938, p. 150). The Committee on Higher Institutions

inspected junior colleges offering two years of work. Two of the three members of this committee were from the two state senior colleges. (16th Superintendent, 1936, p.84). Muskogee Junior College notes the special supervision of Dean Roy L. Gittinger of the University of Oklahoma even after 1928 when the school offered a two year program for the first time. (8th Regents, 1956, p.44). El Reno Junior College noted in the same report that as a member of the American Association of Junior Colleges its credits transfer readily to senior colleges anywhere in the United States. (8th Regents at p. 43). By 1946 the Oklahoma State Regents had established basic curricula in many fields of study including arts and sciences which was to insure the junior college student a definite path when transferring to a senior institution. (3rd Regents, 1946, p.27). One-day conferences were held in the 1940's to identify problems and inform two-year colleges how to alleviate them. (Burson, 1979). Problems apparently persisted however. Junior colleges were charged to conduct research for more effective integration of their programs with the four-year programs. (7th Regents, 1954, p.79).

The faculties at the municipal junior colleges were primarily part-time college instructors employed full-time or part-time by the high school. (Cotton, 1929, p. 28). In 1936-37, 78% of the junior college instructors taught less than half-time. Only 5.5% of the local junior college teaching staff was full-time. (17th Superintendent, 1938, p. 71). A full-time teaching load was 18 hours in the junior college. (19th Superintendent, 1942, p.27) The typical administrative pattern had the local board of education at the top, the superintendent of schools (considered the president of the junior college), the high school principal (often the dean of the junior college), and a dean for the junior college often

selected from the faculty. The dean registered students, verified credits, and certified credits to other institutions. (Cotton, 1929, p. 34; Quattlebaum, 1939, p.42). Despite the fact that these teachers came from the high school ranks, they showed substantial education. For 1934, two junior college teachers had doctorates, 41 had masters, and none had less than a bachelor. (15th Superintendent, 1934, p. 186). In 1939, 70.8% of the junior college instructors had master degrees and 1.1% had doctorates. Two of the junior colleges had 100% of their instructors with masters. The minimum educational standards for junior college teaching were a bachelor's degree and one year of graduate work with a masters degree preferred. (Quattlebaum, 1939, pp.; 16th Superintendent, 1936, 83) There were 160 teachers employed in 21 local junior colleges in 1939. In addition, 16 teachers served as administrators. The gender breakdown for the total was 90 men and 86 women. Average instructor age was 33.3 with about half of all teachers in the 26 to 36 age range. The median salary was about $1200 full-time annual. (Quattlebaum, 1939, pp. 43-48). This represents about $16,000 today. (CNN Money online). It is little wonder that low pay was considered a problem in keeping and attracting faculty. (4th Regents, 1948, p. 88).

The local junior colleges tended to be very small. A major concern was that many were too small. (18th Superintendent, 1940, pp. 77-78). Enrollment grew from 27 in 1922 to 130 by 1930. The depression years saw enrollment soar to 1724 by 1940. (18th Superintendent, 1940, p. 297). The ten local junior colleges operating in 1950 had a combined enrollment of 1151. The total enrollment in state supported colleges was 39,113. The total enrollment in the seven state supported junior colleges was 3,587. (5th

Regents, 1950, p. 101).

The local junior colleges served special students. Special students were defined as those over 20 or those that did not meet the minimum admission requirements concerning high school credit. (8th Regents, 1956, p. 90). These students were reported as "unclassified" in state reports. This number had increased to 16% by 1938. This was seen as an effort by the junior colleges to serve the needs of students regardless of their educational attainment. (17th Superintendent, 1938, p. 65). Musselman found an age range of 16 to 27 for men and 17 to 36 for women. Thirty percent of the men were over 20 and sixteen percent of the women were over 20. (Musselman, 1938, pp. 16-17). A question remained after the 1939 legislation concerning whether students over 21 could be admitted. (Oklahoma State Regents, 1942, p. 67). Forty-three percent of students said they would not have been able to attend college without the presence of the local junior college. (Musselman, 1938, p. 29). Seventy percent of the students were carrying 13 or more hours. Only 14.9% carried less than 11 hours. (Musselman, 1938, p. 26). The most prevalent occupation for the father of the students was farmer. There was a great variety after that but only 16 of 267 reported professional related occupations of banker, attorney, dentist, doctor, engineer, minister, and teacher. (Musselman, 1938, p. 14). Poteau Junior College constantly reported that their existence allowed the poor students in their part of the state their only chance to get an education. They further indicated that many of their students had problems due to age, their "fumbling use of English, their unsophisticated approach to abstract learning, physical immaturity or emotional instability". The close instructor-student relationships combated these problems. (11th

Regents, 1962, p. 74).

It must be noted that the colleges did not serve black students. Oklahoma was a Jim Crow state. The college at Langston served the black students. It also likely that the schools did not serve American Indians. Indian University was founded in 1881 by the American Baptist Home Mission Society. In 1910 it became Bacone College and operated as a junior college. (Nutter, 1974, p. 14; 1st Regents, 1942, p. 62).

The junior colleges, as extra-legal institutions, lacked authority to raise public funds for operations. Most charged tuition, especially to out of district students. They did this despite an Attorney General ruling to the contrary. (Cotton, 1929, p. 16). The concern was that tuition did not cover the costs and thus drained the elementary and secondary schools. (16th Superintendent, 1936, p. 4; 18th Superintendent, 1940, p. 75). The 1939 legislation simply made legal what the schools had been doing. The legislation prohibited the raising of revenue by local property taxes beyond what the common schools were authorized. (19th Superintendent, 1942, p.25; Nutter, 1974, p.20). The two semester tuition in 1940 ranged from $50 to $100. (18th Superintendent, 1940, p. 298). The equivalent in today's dollars is approximately $652 and $1302. (CNN Money web site). In 1940, none of the two-year colleges received direct funding from the local school district. Two of the one-year colleges received such funding. The colleges as a whole ran a surplus. (18th Superintendent, 1940, pp. 299-300). In a call for legislation in 1932, the State Superintendent indicated that the law should probably not include state funding. (14th Superintendent, 1932, p. 9). Two years later, the State Superintendent noted that many felt that the junior colleges should not charge tuition. Further, it seemed reasonable

to allow the communities to finance by taxation should they so choose. (15th Superintendent, 1934. p. 185). In 1942, the Municipal Junior College Association met to consider how the colleges might get funds to expand programs. Plan A called for partial state funding and partial student funding. Plan B put the junior colleges clearly as part of the common schools and state aid was provided based on formulas used in funding common education. (19th Superintendent, 1942, pp. 29-32). Later it was recommended that Grades 13 and 14 be considered an integral part of the public schools and financed with state aid in same way as grades 1 through 12. (5th Regents, 1950, p.94).

The local municipal junior colleges are no longer with us. Sayre Junior College was the last to operate as such until absorbed into Southwestern Oklahoma State University in 1987. (Cook, 1996, p. 560). Muskogee Junior College, the first Oklahoma municipal junior college closed its doors in 1962. (Nutter, 1974, pp. 47-48). After 1952, five municipal junior colleges continued into the late 1960's and 1970's and were eventually made a part of the state system. Altus Junior College is now Western Oklahoma State College, a 2 year state college since 1969. In 1973, Seminole Junior College (now Seminole State College) became a state supported two year college. In the same year, Poteau Junior College which became Carl Albert Junior College became a state supported two year college and is now called Carl Albert State College. And finally, in 1973 El Reno Junior College (now Redlands Community College) joined that state system as a two year college. (Cook, 1996, pp. 559-60).

It is easy to criticize these schools as under funded, too small, too narrow, lacking extra-curricular activities, not achieving anything but state accreditation, and so forth.

However, my view is quite the opposite. These schools were created by local people to serve their needs without any real legal justification and guidance. They did what they had to do to obtain an education they desired. These institutions were not created by the larger schools or the state as a way to divert the less deserving or less desirable students from academics. They were created by locals with the express purpose of helping their own obtain academic achievement. They seemed either to resist intentionally or through lack of funding or other support the push to comprehsiveness. This may have been the cause of their ultimate demise. But one must wonder if the call toward a comprehensive institution was motivated by honorable and just intentions. Is it not much easier to guide and counsel people into vocational programs when such programs exist within the institution and fall under the auspices of a "college"? There seems to be motivation in comprehensive institutions to let the students try out courses in academic programs, pay the tuition and fees, and if they fail to suggest other avenues that may not be in the best interests of the students. This is the "soft" response to sidetrack unpromising students. (Clark, 1960, p.571). There seems to be a conflict of interest in such institutions. What might have been the course of things had the local junior colleges insisted on maintaining their academic pre-professional course exclusively? In such situations, should they advise students that perhaps another journey would be better, they would not be standing in a position to profit on such. The student would need to go to another institution for such training. Why must all institutions look the same in order to be considered successful? Cotton picked up on this idea when he stated that it was probably a good idea that the junior colleges were not yet extensively regulated, they still could experiment and

investigate and adjust. (Cotton, 1929, p. 36).

The State Two-Year Colleges Revisited

The six normal schools which had offered two year teacher training all became four-year colleges. The University Preparatory School in Tonkawa added college work to the high school program in 1920, was recognized legally as a junior college in 1941, and ended the high school program in 1951. (Balyeat, 1948, p. 61; 6th Regents, 1952, p. 37). The school achieved North Central Accreditation in 1948 and operates today as a two-year college called Northern Oklahoma College. (9th Regents, 1958, p. 85). The other state preparatory school in Claremore became the Oklahoma Military Academy in 1919. Soon it offered a junior college course of study and 1971 became Claremore Junior College and is now Rogers State University, a four-year college. (Balyeat, 1948, p. 61; 17th Regents, 1973, p. iv; Cook, 1996, p.558; 16th Regents, 1971, p.42). The six state agricultural schools were legally recognized as junior colleges in the 1920's. The school in Goodwell became junior college in 1921 and a four-year in 1926. (Nutter, 1974, p. 16). It now operates as Oklahoma Panhandle State University. (Balyeat, 1948, p. 60; Nutter, 1974, p. 16). The school at Lawton became a four-year in the late 1960's and today operates as Cameron University. (Cook, 1996, p. 558). The rest continue to operate as two-year colleges: Connors State College in Warner, Eastern Oklahoma State College in Wilburton, Northeastern Oklahoma A & M College in Miami, and Murray State College in Tishomingo.

The key difference between the state funded junior colleges and the municipal junior colleges involve funding. The state supported colleges simply had more resources and

were able to operate in their own buildings. The reports filed by the institutions are dominated by reports of various building projects. They also embraced the concept of becoming more comprehensive institutions perhaps due to the availability of funds and also due to pressure from the state authorities. They also tended to achieve regional accreditation. (13th Regents, 1966, p.135). With the exception of the Oklahoma Military Academy, most were more localized than the senior institutions. Class sizes were smaller. Most, if not all, sought four-year status.

Summary

Oklahoma's public junior colleges developed along two paths. State supported junior colleges arose from the expansion of the state supported preparatory schools and the six agricultural schools. Local school districts established what was mistakenly referred to as municipal junior colleges. The first schools established for either path were formally recognized as junior colleges in 1920. There is considerable confusion before 1920 because of the fluidity of the institutions, the uniqueness of Oklahoma's state created institutions, confusion over the term "junior college", and such confusion in light of the use of "two-year" as a descriptor.

The municipal junior colleges are remarkable because they were created without any direct legal authorization and regulation. They were created locally and supported by tuition at a time when the state institutions did not charge tuition. They charged tuition despite the opinion of the state's highest law officer that they could not do so. The Oklahoma reasons for their creation appear to be based on economy in that the students could stay at home and not incur room and board and travel costs. Parents wanted their

children at home and felt that the students would be more mature when they finally went off to college. These colleges offered the first two-years of the senior college curriculum. They struggled to offer other courses either for lack of student interest or funding. The state senior colleges had a close relationship to the schools since they were essentially responsible for their supervision and state accreditation. This relationship appeared to enhance transfer and articulation. Retention of students from the first to the second year was a problem just as it was at the senior schools. The faculties were educated but most were part-time college and part-time high school. Salaries were low. Classes were small. The institutions served non-traditional students at least as concerns age and prior academic achievement. They admitted older students even as the Oklahoma Regents wondered about the legality of doing so after the 1939 legislation. But these institutions show the will of people to seek continuing education and to create opportunities for such where none exists. Perhaps this is the greatest lesson to learn and one that should be remembered by state institutions unwilling to change and adapt.

The municipal junior colleges were not favored by the State of Oklahoma. The state asserted regulation but refused funding. The reports are critical of the colleges for not being comprehensive as the education specialists of the time deemed essential. Comprehensive meant offering terminal programs. These terminal programs seem especially crucial to the elite when poor and non-traditional students are involved. The experts whine on about the junior colleges meeting local needs. Yet they fail to see that these colleges, like no other, were exactly meeting the needs of the community. These schools were created and controlled locally. The State of Oklahoma did love these

schools at certain times. They were seen as a way to keep the wandering youths of the Great Depression under control. They were seen as a place to put those pesky and demanding older World War II veterans after the war.

No new municipal junior colleges were created after 1939 legislation limiting funding and the creation of the state coordinating board for higher education. Four of the municipal junior colleges became state supported two-year colleges and one was absorbed into a state four-year. The others closed.

The state supported two-year colleges had better funding and became more comprehensive. This allowed them to please the elite accrediting bodies and obtain regional accreditation. The two state preparatory schools both became state supported junior colleges and one is now a four-year college. The six district agricultural schools all became state supported junior colleges and two are now four-year colleges.

Our schools are a battleground for the social classes. History is important because it illuminates this ongoing struggle. We can find the courage from the past to provide opportunities for all of our people to grow and learn regardless of their class, race, age, gender, nationality, and ethnicity. We can find the courage from the past to question those calling for standards, rules and regulations, and national accreditation. My hope is that this paper contributes in some small way.

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